S 1802

79226

1939

MIDDLE EAST

79226

SETTLEMENT OF JEWISH REFUGEES

CO 732 / 85 / 14

IN IRAQ

Previous

Subsequent

Department CO
Series 732
Piece 85/14

R 83	22/7
Mr. Bennett	25/7
Mr. Downie	2/8
Sir J. Shuckburgh	—
R 83	14/8
Mr Downie	16/8
Sir J. Shuckburgh	15/9/39
Sir C. Parkinson	18/8
S of S.	22/8
Pal. Dept.	22/5
R[illegible]	24/8
83	

FILE A.

(1228). Wt. 30384/7. 17,006. 11/38.
N.P.Co. G.682/77a.

C.J
S
R
J.

1 F.O —— W10154/10154/48 —— 12-J. 39

Trs. of ltr. of 11.7.39 from Sir B. Newton (Bagdad) to M. Randall regdg. settlement of Jewish refugees in Iraq.

P.C. (U.K.) (P) 31 regd on 7922b/1/39. Sec.

I attach a copy of P.C. (U.K.)(P) 31 to which Mr. Randall's letter to Sir B. Newton refers. Since this is a secret document the file had better be secret.

not necessary to secure

I did not know that the S. of S. Nos Jewish had asked for this to be followed up, and I have not been able to find any papers. But we may await the reply from Bagdad?

J.S. Barnes
25/7/39

I should have thought that this was premature - but Sir B. Newton has been given full discretion in the matter.

W.J. Norris
26.7.39

W.S. 26/7/39

2 D.P. Reilly —— at once 2.8.39

Ref 1. Trs. of reply from H.M.'s Ambassador at Bagdad regdg possibility of Jewish immigration into Iraq.

I think that we can only agree. It is no use hurrying them.

W.S. 15/8/39

? ack and concur
2.8.39 M.W. H. 15/8/39

J To. Prilly (F.O) 2 answd. 30/8/39

In any further communication on this subject, please quote
No. W.10154/10154/48
and address—*not to any person by name*, but to—
"The Under-Secretary of State," Foreign Office, London, S.W. 1.

D 1

THE Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs presents his compliments to the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies and, by direction of the Secretary of State, transmits herewith cop of the under-mentioned paper.

Foreign Office,
12 JUL 1939 , 19 .

RECEIVED
13 JUL 1939
C. O. REGY

Reference to previous correspondence :

Description of Enclosure.

Name and Date.	Subject.
To. Sir B. Newton (Bagdad) from Mr Randall of 11. July.	Settlement of refugees in Iraq.

Similar letter sent to

6130 18804

FOREIGN OFFICE, S.W.1.

11th July, 1939.

(W 10154/10154/48)

Dear Newton,

You may perhaps remember that in the course of an informal discussion which took place with the Delegates of Egypt, Iraq and Saudi Arabia to the Palestine Conference on the 10th March, the Secretary of State for the Colonies suggested to them that the "Neighbouring States" might help with the problem of Jewish refugees by themselves taking a certain number of these refugees and so reducing the pressure on Palestine. You will see from page 12 of the record of the meeting in question (P.C.(U.K.)(P)31), which was sent to you on the 14th March, that Saiyid Taufiq Suwaidi indicated that opinion in Iraq would have to be prepared before anything of the sort could be regarded as possible, but added that if the Palestinian question were settled, the immigration of Jews into Iraq might no longer be regarded as a threat,

and/

Sir Basil Newton, K.C.M.G.

Bagdad.

and in due course something might be done.

2. We realise of course that too much reliance cannot be placed on Saiyid Taufiq Suwaidi's words, which may only have been meant as a polite form of saying that Jewish immigration into Iraq was not practical politics. But in view of the great difficulty of finding outlets for Jewish refugees from Central Europe and of the consequent increase of illegal immigration into Palestine, which is becoming a most serious and embarrassing problem, we feel that we must not neglect any possible alternative outlets, however unlikely, and the Secretary of State for the Colonies has asked whether it would not be possible to follow up the Iraqi Delegate's remarks.

3. Now that a section of the Jewish population in Palestine has unfortunately embarked in its turn on a policy of terrorism, anti-Jewish feeling in Iraq must be more inflamed than ever, and the Iraqi Government may well consider that they have quite enough on their hands protecting the existing Jewish element in the country, without accepting new and unpopular responsibilities. On the other hand, viewed dispassionately, the right kind

of/

of immigrant should be a useful addition to Iraq, while it is as much in the interests of the Iraqi Government as it is in our own that the pressure of immigration on Palestine should slacken.

4. We should, therefore, be very grateful for your observations on the possibility of Jewish immigration into Iraq, now or in the not too remote future. There would be no objection at this end to your discussing the matter unofficially with General Nuri, if you hold that this would serve any purpose other than to cause him irritation.

Yours ever

(Sgd.) A. W. G. RANDALL

Copy

(W 11397/10154/48)

(488[redacted]2/39)

British Embassy,

Bagdad.

22nd July, 1939.

My dear Randall,

In your letter No. W 10154/10154/48 of July 11th, you reminded me of a suggestion made by the Secretary of State for the Colonies at the Palestine Conference in London last March that the "neighbouring States" might help with the problem of Jewish refugees by taking a certain number of these people into their own countries. You also referred me to Taufiq Suwaidi's remarks on this subject and asked whether there was any possibility of Jewish immigration into Iraq being permitted now or in the not too remote future.

As you yourself point out, Taufiq Suwaidi was most guarded but he made one point clear, and that was that the Palestinian question must be settled before there was any chance of Jewish immigration into Iraq becoming possible. By settled he obviously meant an agreed settlement. That unfortunately has not been achieved and so we have not yet reached the point at which consideration of Taufiq Suwaidi's luke-warm acquiescence might possibly begin. Moreover, as you have foreseen, the fact that the Jews in Palestine are now embarking on a policy of terrorism against the Arabs would make it especially inopportune at present to suggest to the Iraqi Government that they should admit 20,000 Jewish refugees

/to

A.W.G.Randall, Esq., O.B.E.

to Iraq. It may be, as you suggest, that it is in the interests of the Iraqi Government that the pressure of immigration on Palestine should slacken, but it is not clear to me how this would be achieved or the racial conflict there mitigated unless there were a corresponding reduction of the admissions into Palestine. There is presumably no question of any bargain of that kind. In any case, however, I much doubt whether the Iraqi Government would in fact be wise to allow a large number of Jewish refugees into Iraq, or whether we should be justified in advising in that sense.

It is not necessary for me to remind you that the Government and the administration here have not developed much strength or efficiency, and I think we should ask ourselves whether the machinery of the State would be able to withstand the ferment which would be likely to result from the sudden immigration of several thousand European Jews. These Jews, as we know from experience in Palestine , are particularly difficult to assimilate and their restlessness would certainly disturb and thereby endanger the position of the existing native Iraqi Jews and might even jeopardise the orderly development of the country and our own position in it. It would no doubt be sedulously propaganded about that this was the thin end of a wedge for turning Iraq into a second Palestine.

From this point of view alone, I feel that it would be unwise to pursue here now the suggestion so naturally but also so tentatively put forward at the London Conference, quite apart from the fact that it seems hardly conceivable that

/the

the present or any future Government which can as yet be foreseen could agree to any scheme of that kind.

One final point, I think it might be very embarrassing for Taufiq Suwaidi to be associated with such a project and if at your end it is desired, in spite of the considerations which I have outlined above, that I should tkae up the matter with the Prime Minister, I think in fairness to Taufiq we should obtain his consent in the first place.

Yours ever,

(Signed) Basil Newton.

2

FOREIGN OFFICE, S.W.1.

12th August, 1939.

(W 11397/10154/48)

Arrived 3

1

Dear Downie

With reference to Foreign Office letter No. W 10154/10154/48 of the 12th July I enclose a copy of the reply which has been received from His Majesty's Ambassador at Bagdad to our enquiry about the possibility of getting the Iraqi Government to allow the immigration of Jews into Iraq.

2. In the light of Sir Basil Newton's comments on the suggestion, we feel that we can only agree that he should take no further action in the matter.

Yours sincerely

D. P. Reilly

H.F.Downie, Esq., C.M.G., O.B.E.

(*3950—150) Wt. 40262—29 30,000 3/39 T.S. 695

79226/39. Middle East.

C.O.
R 26 AUG
D 28~

5

C. O.

Mr. Clark. 24/8/39.
Mr. Beckett. 29/8
Mr.
Mr. A. J. Dawe.
Sir H. Moore.
Sir G. Tomlinson.
Sir J. Shuckburgh.
Permt. U.S. of S.
Parly. U.S. of S.
Secretary of State.

s/o for signature by Mr. Downie.

Downing Street.
30 August, 1939.

DRAFT.

D. P. REILLY, ESQ.,

(Foreign Office,
S.W.1.)

Dear Reilly,

Many thanks for your letter (2) No.W 11397/10154/48 of the 12th August enclosing a copy of the reply from His Majesty's Ambassador at Bagdad to ~~your~~ the enquiry (which was made by him) about the possibility of getting the Iraqi Government to allow the immigration of Jews into Iraq.

We agree that it does not appear possible to take any ~~no~~ further action ~~should be taken~~ in the matter.

Yrs.,

(Sgd. S.V. LUKE.

FURTHER ACTION.

79226

Settlement of Jewish Refugees in Iraq. July 11-August 30, 1939. MS Refugee Records from the War Cabinet, the Colonial Office, the Home Office and the War Office, 1935-1949 CO 732/85/14. The National Archives (Kew, United Kingdom). Refugees, Relief, and Resettlement, link.gale.com/apps/doc/AKGFIO988464604/RRRW?u=omni&sid=bookmark-RRRW&pg=5. Accessed 1 Jan. 2025.